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SUBJECT: KUWAIT'S NUCLEAR ENERGY PLANS STILL PRELIMINARY

REF: A. STATE 53334
[1](#)B. KUWAIT 184

[1](#)1. (SBU) On June 4, Econcouns used the fact sheet on the U.S.-UAE Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (123 Agreement) to discuss Kuwait's plans for peaceful nuclear energy with Dr. Nader Al-Awadhi, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) Deputy Director General for Information and Kuwait's National Liaison Officer to the IAEA. Awadhi expressed a great deal of interest in the terms of the 123 Agreement, asking what sorts of bilateral cooperation would be possible with U.S. companies and the USG in advance of any 123 agreement. (Note: He appeared to be thinking both of the GCC-wide consultancy agreement that he said was currently being tendered and of possible Kuwaiti plans. End Note.) Awadhi described Kuwait's plans as basically two complementary tracks: domestic and GCC.

Domestic Plans -----

[1](#)2. (SBU) Awadhi stressed that examining nuclear power was a priority for the Amir. He explained that Kuwait had set up a national committee for nuclear power under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. In response to the question as to whether there had been any follow-up in setting up a working level secretariat for this committee, he admitted there hadn't, noting "we haven't had a government for a few months now." He said that Kuwait had sent teams to South Africa and France to evaluate reactor technology for "fact finding only." Awadhi explained that he had been very impressed by South Africa's Modular Pebble Bed Reactor design, both for its safety features and for its ability to generate very high temperatures, which has some applications that are useful for Kuwait's oil industry. He questioned, however, whether South Africa's technology was quite ready to be commercialized. In response to a question from Econcouns on how the domestic nuclear energy program would fit into the GCC-wide program, Awadhi explained that the work Kuwait did could feed into the GCC-wide effort and visa versa, since requirements for developing nuclear power included setting up an appropriate regulatory environment and developing the technical expertise.

GCC-Efforts -----

[1](#)3. (SBU) Awadhi briefly discussed the GCC effort to develop nuclear power. He explained that the IAEA had conducted a number of preliminary studies for the GCC to determine whether nuclear power was feasible and determined that it was. The GCC would now be conducting phase one studies on the legal, regulatory, infrastructure and other requirements for nuclear power in order to be able to determine whether it made sense to move forward. Awadhi explained that the GCC

was issuing a tender for a consultant to manage the studies (noting that he was on the evaluating committee). He added that he expected the studies to last about a year or a year and a half, after which the GCC would be able to make an informed decision on whether to move forward. He noted that there were still several unanswered questions about how the GC would implement a joint nuclear program, including issues of funding, ownership, siting, and how to share the power.

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